

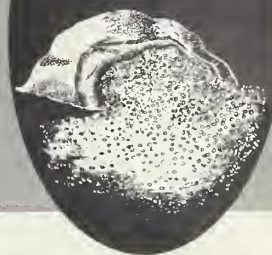
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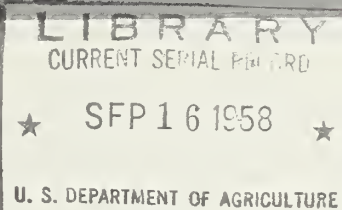
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SEEDS



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INCREASED DEMAND FOR AUSTRALIAN SEEDS STRENGTHENS

PRICES DESPITE LARGE OLD-CROP CARRYOVER

Production of pasture seeds in Australia during the 1956-57 season was generally lower than the bumper harvest in 1955-56 because of unfavorable weather and low prices. Output of subterranean clover seed fell sharply in Western Australia and was not entirely offset by increased production in New South Wales. Alfalfa seed output showed an increase, and Dallisgrass seed crops were about normal.

Carryover stocks from the previous season, however, were of record proportions and adequate to cover requirements — with the exception of Hardinggrass, which Australia has been importing for several years.

Prices declined substantially during late 1956 and early 1957, as last season's big crops reduced demand from farmers. Prices reached their lowest point in February 1957 but later improved considerably. The smaller 1956-57 harvest and increased domestic and export demand were probably responsible for this recovery.

Exports and imports continued at a high level, with exports up well over 25 percent from the previous season.

SPECIFIC CROPS

Subterranean Clover: Australian production of sub clover seed in 1956-57 was considerably lower than a year earlier, mainly due to a sharp reduction in seed harvesting in Western Australia, the principal producer of sub-clover seed in previous years. Western Australia had a record harvest during 1955-56, when a total of nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds of seed were certified by the Department of Agriculture.

Dwalganup, particularly, was overproduced, and 1956-57 prices fell to a very low level. Unusually heavy rains in early 1956 limited the demand for seed, as farmers were unable to work the wet soils; this further contributed to the price decline. As a result, applications for certification dropped sharply and production declined correspondingly.

Production in New South Wales, however, increased substantially. As in Western Australia, the number of farmers who applied for paddock inspection under the New South Wales certification scheme was somewhat smaller than a year earlier, but production was higher on a per-farm basis.

Production of sub clover seed in Victoria was estimated to be about the same as a year earlier, while South Australia's output was down. This was largely due to the much smaller quantity of Mount Barker sub clover seed harvested in that State following the decline in prices. The harvest during the coming season may be lower than last year as a result of the dry conditions which have prevailed over most of Australia. As no general rains have been received in the producing areas of Western Australia and New South Wales during the winter and spring period, seed setting may be light. On the other hand, even if seed setting is not good, a dry summer may permit harvesting over an extended period, and production could be close to that of 1956-57.

Prices will be a major influence on production, and although carryover stocks at the end of the 1955-56 season were rather high, smaller harvests this past year and increased demand for the coming season may mean substantial improvement in prices.

SUBTERRANEAN CLOVER SEED: Production of certified seed in principal producing States, 1956-57

Variety	New South Wales	Western Australia	South Australia
	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
Mount Barker	2,542	531	804
Dwalganup	952	2,047	6
Bacchus Marsh	703	11	103
Tallarook	276	25	8
Clare	43	-	19
Yarloop	-	298	-
Total	4,516	2,912	940

SUBTERRANEAN CLOVER SEED: Production by State, 1955-56 and estimated 1956-57 ^{1/}

State	1955-56	1956-57
	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
New South Wales	4,032	4,704
Victoria	896	896
South Australia	2,240	1,232
Western Australia	4,480	3,136
Total	11,648	9,968

^{1/} No official or trade estimates available for the uncertified seed production; estimated by FAS Agricultural Attache office.

Alfalfa: Production of alfalfa seed in Australia during 1956-57 increased substantially over a year earlier. The fact that imports of alfalfa seed were prohibited about a year ago to prevent the introduction of bacterial wilt and Pearce's disease may largely account for the increased popularity of this seed crop. The import prohibition has resulted in a significant price increase, despite the fact that Australia normally is a surplus producer of some varieties of alfalfa seed. These higher domestic prices have reduced exports to a low level, thereby increasing availability of seed for the local market.

ALFALFA SEED: Acreage harvested and production,
by State, 1955-56 and estimated 1956-57

State	Acreage harvested		Production	
	1955-56	1956-57	1955-56	1956-57
	Acres	Acres	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds
New South Wales	19,131	20,000	986	1,344
Victoria	neg.	neg.	neg.	neg.
Queensland	763	1,000	190	224
South Australia	26,357	25,000	1,505	1,344
Western Australia	16	20	2	2
Tasmania	47	50	7	7
Total	46,314	46,070	2,690	2,921

Other clover and legume seeds: Production of Strawberry clover is largely centered in South Australia, which produced approximately 100,000 pounds of Strawberry clover seed in 1955-56 and 121,000 pounds in 1956-57.

Irrigation white clover seed, a local white clover strain, comes mostly from New South Wales and Victoria. Certified production of this strain in New South Wales in 1956-57 was about 11,000 pounds, but additional quantities of uncertified white and red clover estimated at about 179,000 pounds were harvested in Victoria. New Zealand supplies the bulk of Australian requirements of white and red clover seed, while requirements of Ladino and other clovers are met by imports from Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

Bur-clovers, or medics, are assuming increased importance for use in the lower-rainfall areas. The New South Wales Department of Agriculture now has a seed certification scheme for Barrel Medic 173, a superior variety, and about 11,000 pounds of this seed were certified during the past season. This medic appears to be highly suitable for the average soils in northwest New South Wales, and with the encouragement of the Department of Agriculture, production should expand significantly during the next few years. Other States also are experimenting with barrel medics -- particularly South Australia, which produced about 40,000 pounds in 1955-56. Production figures for 1956-57 are not yet available.

Hardinggrass: Production of Hardinggrass in Australia is largely confined to the States of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. Queensland produces a negligible amount. Production of seed during 1955-56 totaled 502,000 pounds, of which 155,000 pounds were produced in New South Wales, 278,000 in Victoria, and 70,000 in South Australia.

Drought this past season cut the total 1956-57 crop to about 243,000 pounds, although prospects early in the season had been good. South Australia's Department of Agriculture certified only 64,000 pounds; preliminary estimates show 67,000 pounds for New South Wales, and 112,000 pounds for Victoria.

In normal production years the demand for this seed exceeds local supply, and substantial imports from the United States are necessary. With strong demand and reduced domestic supply, increased purchases of U.S. seed this year appear likely.

Dallisgrass: Production of Dallisgrass in Australia is confined to the States of New South Wales and Queensland, and approximates 1,800,000 to 2,240,000 pounds per annum. The New South Wales Department of Agriculture estimates production in that State during 1956-57 at 1,568,000 pounds; Queensland production may approximate 448,000 pounds. This is well above local requirements, and each year a substantial proportion is exported, particularly to the United States.

Merchants are said to be somewhat concerned about the reportedly heavy stocks U.S. buyers carried forward from purchases made during the previous year, and prices have declined. However, July and August 1957 exports of Dallisgrass to the United States were over 230,000 pounds^{1/}, and 1957-58 purchases by the United States may not be much lower than in previous years. Also, the lower price may encourage exports to New Zealand, Kenya, and Brazil and offset any decline in shipments to the United States.

Ryegrasses: Ryegrasses are produced in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. Production in New South Wales is largely confined to annual Wimmera ryegrass, of which about 157,000 pounds were produced during 1956-57; about 4,500 pounds of certified perennial ryegrass seed also was produced. Victorian production data are not available, but it is believed that 1955-56 production of perennial ryegrass seed amounted to about 2,912,000 pounds; Wimmera ryegrass seed about 605,000 pounds; and H. I. ryegrass seed approximately 31,000 pounds. The 1956-57 harvest appears to have been substantially larger. South Australia produces about 672,000 pounds of Wimmera and only small amounts of perennial and H. I. ryegrass seed.

Increased production of perennial ryegrass seed in Victoria during the past two years has caused a marked decline in prices. During 1955 the average price paid to growers for certified seed was \$5.04 per bushel of 20 pounds, while in some instances as much as \$7.00 per bushel was paid. Uncertified seed at that time sold at approximately \$3.36 per bushel. The price fell drastically during the 1956 season, and a further decline occurred during 1957, bringing the price for certified seed as low as \$1.40 per bushel in September.

^{1/} Note: United States imports July 1-November 30, 1957 totaled 831,000 pounds, all from Australia.

Production of H. I. ryegrass seed in Australia is relatively small - - probably about 67,000 pounds. The bulk of requirements is imported from New Zealand. Demand for this seed apparently continues strong, and imports from New Zealand during 1956-57 were substantially larger than those for the previous year.

Rhodesgrass: Production of Rhodesgrass seed is mainly centered in Queensland although New South Wales produces a small quantity. Queensland's 1955-56 output was estimated at about 72,000 pounds, while New South Wales production probably did not exceed 2,000 pounds. Prices for Rhodesgrass seed increased from 58¢ per pound in 1956 to 90¢ per pound in 1957, which is probably indicative of an increased demand, although production during the past year may have been somewhat lower due to dry conditions.

Sudangrass: Production of common and sweet Sudangrass seed is also largely confined to Queensland. New South Wales and Victoria each produce about 34,000 pounds annually, while production in Queensland during the 1955-56 season was estimated at about 2 million pounds. As with many other seeds, prices declined the past year. Production data for the 1956-57 season are not yet available.

Perennial Veldtgrass: Production of this grass seed is limited to South Australia, which produced approximately 7,000 pounds of seed in 1955-56. Production has increased during the last two years, and the price has come down from a high of \$1.60 per pound in 1955-56 to 92¢ per pound in September 1957.

Buffelgrass: Production of buffelgrass is centered in Queensland and Western Australia. Production data for Western Australia are not available, but in the 1955-56 season, Queensland produced about 22,000 pounds. It is believed that output increased in both of these States during the past year.

"Other" grasses: Small quantities of Molassesgrass seed, Prairiegrass seed, Liverseedgrass seed, and Green Panicgrass seed are produced in Queensland, while other States produce small quantities of Mitchell, Birdwood, and Orchardgrass, as well as Evening Primrose and other seeds. Production data on these seeds are not obtainable, and in view of their relative unimportance no attempt has been made to estimate the supply position.

Lupines: Production of lupine seed in Western Australia during the 1956-57 season was near that of 1955-56, judging from recent reports. The Western Australian Department of Agriculture indicated a crop of 668,000 pounds of New Zealand common blue lupine seed and 177,000 pounds of Western Australian blue lupine seed for the 1955-56 season.

Trade sources estimate that production during 1956-57 was of similar proportions, amounting to about 672,000 pounds and 179,000 pounds, respectively. The bulk of Australia's lupine seed requirements is imported from New Zealand. The price of Western Australian-grown New Zealand common blue lupine seed is currently quoted at \$4.20 per bushel of 60 pounds.

GRASS AND LEGUME SEEDS: Acreage by State,
1954-55, 1955-56 and estimated 1956-57

State	1954-55	1955-56	1956-57 ^{1/}
	<u>1,000 acres</u>	<u>1,000 acres</u>	<u>1,000 acres</u>
New South Wales	6,866	7,711	9,040
Victoria	8,660	9,251	9,910
Queensland	1,885	1,885	1,930
South Australia	2,963	2,967	3,500
Western Australia	4,747	5,384	5,700
Tasmania	946	1,115	1,172
A. C. T. ^{2/}	46	52	60
Total	26,113	28,365	31,312

^{1/} Estimated. ^{2/} Australian Capital Territory.

GRASS AND LEGUME SEEDS: Wholesale prices, per pound,
f.o.b. in 100-pound lots, September 1956 and 1957

Kind of seed	September 1956	September 1957
	<u>U.S. cents</u>	<u>U.S. cents</u>
Sub clover (certified):		
Dwalganup	22.4	16.8
Bacchus Marsh	30.8	39.2
Mt. Barker	28.0	28.0
Yarloop	^{1/}	25.2
Tallarook	80.3	34.5
Clare	^{1/}	84.0
Other clovers:		
Berseem	48.5	56.0
New Zealand red	48.5	67.2
New Zealand white	^{1/}	61.6
Alfalfa:		
South Australian	82.1	61.6
Hunter River	82.1	58.8
Grasses:		
Wimmera ryegrass	12.1	9.3
H. I. ryegrass	^{1/}	14.9
Perennial ryegrass	^{1/}	14.9
Buffel	134.4	134.4
Birdwood	179.2	^{1/}
Liverseed	84.0	^{1/}
Molasses	102.7	78.4
Prairie	18.7	^{1/}
Rhodes	57.9	89.6
Dallis	52.3	39.2
Perennial Veldt	^{1/}	92.4
Harding	^{1/}	128.8
Sudan, common	12.1	^{1/}
Sudan, sweet	25.2	18.7
Lupines:		
New Zealand blue	^{1/}	7.0

^{1/} Not available.

FOREIGN TRADE

Increased production of pasture seeds in Australia during recent years and continued pasture improvement have kept Australia's imports and exports of grass and legume seeds at a high level.

Exports: Not only did the number of export markets increase manyfold in 1956-57 compared with a year earlier, but fairly important traditional markets increased their purchases considerably -- particularly the United States, the Union of South Africa, and Chile. The Australian Department of Trade is developing markets for Australian seed in South American countries, specifically Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina. The Department believes that climatic conditions in those countries closely resemble those of Australia, and that Australian seed will therefore prove superior to North American.

Statistics on exports of sub clover seed from Australia were not compiled separately prior to 1956-57, but beginning with the 1957-58 fiscal year these exports are now separately recorded. Exports of all seed included under "other grass and legume seeds" show a substantial increase compared with 1955-56, rising from 1,884,000 to 2,386,000 pounds. Sub clover and Dallis-grass seed made up a substantial proportion of these exports. Exports of Wimmera ryegrass seed were small, consisting of parcels totaling less than 22,000 pounds to the Union of South Africa, Chile, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Imports: Ryegrass seed from New Zealand was the most important import item in 1956-57, as in previous years. Imports of this seed during the past season amounted to 3.25 million pounds, compared with 2.7 million pounds during 1955-56. Of this total, the United Kingdom supplied only 25,000 pounds, New Zealand supplying the rest.

Clover seed imports, other than sub clover, were smaller than a year earlier but still substantially higher than those recorded for 1954-55. Total imports of clover seed amounted to 1,375,000 pounds, compared with 1,617,000 pounds in 1955-56. The bulk of the imports consisted of New Zealand white and red clover, although small quantities were also imported from France, Italy and the United States. Imports from the United States totaled 144,000 pounds, compared with 33,000 pounds in 1955-56 -- an increase of 336 percent. Most of the seed purchased from the United States is believed to have been Ladino.

Imports of seed are under administrative control, and dollar licenses are only issued when the particular seed is not available from non-dollar countries or is inferior in quality to U.S. seed. Up to now, requirements for Bermuda-grass seed have been covered by imports from India, as import licensing authorities consider that quality differential between Indian and U.S. seed is not important enough to warrant dollar expenditure. Accordingly, it appears that licenses for the import of Bermuda-grass seed from the United States will be difficult to obtain.

GRASS AND LEGUME SEEDS: Exports by country of destination,
1955-56 and 1956-57

Kind of seed and country of destination	1955-56	1956-57
	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
Ryegrasses:		
United Kingdom	--	2
New Zealand	18	--
Union of South Africa	3	21
Chile	--	7
Italy	--	6
Total	21	36
Other grasses and legumes:		
United Kingdom	4	2
Papua and New Guinea	17	3
Canada	7	--
Cyprus	<u>1/</u>	1
Kenya	<u>1/</u>	23
Hong Kong	<u>1/</u>	5
New Zealand	667	647
Union of South Africa	64	129
Other Commonwealth countries	26	--
Argentina	<u>2/</u>	1
Belgium-Luxembourg	<u>2/</u>	4
Chile	18	119
France	<u>2/</u>	14
Society Islands	<u>2/</u>	2
Germany, West	<u>2/</u>	8
Japan	<u>2/</u>	2
Netherlands	10	3
Netherlands' New Guinea	<u>2/</u>	1
Philippine Republic	<u>2/</u>	1
Spanish Timor	<u>2/</u>	2
Spain	<u>2/</u>	27
Sweden	<u>2/</u>	2
United States	890	1,112
Hawaiian Islands	<u>2/</u>	3
Uruguay	177	274
Other countries	5	--
Total	1,885	2,385
Total grasses and legumes	1,906	2,421

1/ May be included under "Other Commonwealth countries". 2/ May be included under "Other countries".

GRASS AND LEGUME SEEDS: Exports by country of destination,
July-August 1957

Kind of seed and country of destination	1957 July-August
	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
Sub clover:	
Kenya	4
New Zealand	115
United States	16
United Kingdom	4
Union of South Africa	5
Brazil	7
Total	151
Other clover:	
New Zealand	26
Total	26
Alfalfa:	
Kenya	35
New Zealand	9
Total	44
Dallisgrass:	
Kenya	5
New Zealand	9
Brazil	4
United States	231
Total	249
Ryegrasses:	
Brazil	3
Total	3
Other grasses:	
Kenya	1
New Zealand	27
Brazil	10
Italy	60
United States	150
Total	248
Total grasses and legumes	721

GRASS AND LEGUME SEEDS: Imports by type and country of origin,
1955-56, 1956-57, and July-August 1957

Type and country of origin	1955-56	1956-57	1957 July-August
	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
Clovers:			
United Kingdom	85	6	1
New Zealand	904	1,143	264
Canada	7	2	—
Other Commonwealth countries:	1	—	—
France	70	35	4
Germany	—	1	—
Italy	510	41	—
Netherlands	8	2	1
Sweden	—	—	1
United States	33	144	8
Total	1,618	1,374	279
Ryegrasses:			
United Kingdom	—	25	—
New Zealand	2,720	3,211	942
Netherlands	1	—	—
Total	2,721	3,236	942
Other grasses and legumes:			
United Kingdom	181	98	16
Canada	—	1	—
Ceylon	—	1	—
India	58	19	56
New Zealand	698	368	208
Union of South Africa	42	395	—
Other Commonwealth countries:	2	23	—
Denmark	130	150	11
Finland	—	1	—
France	20	17	—
Germany, West	17	22	4
Indonesia	—	4	—
Italy	5	2	—
Lebanon	—	—	—
Netherlands	35	10	2
Spain	11	4	—
Sweden	2	2	—
Brazil	1	—	—
Morocco	1	—	—
United States	40	69	60
Total	1,243	1,186	366
Total grasses and legumes	5,582	5,796	1,587

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